



Charles Sheeler

Whitney Museum of American Art



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Charles Sheeler

*A Concentration of Works from the Permanent Collection
of the Whitney Museum of American Art*

Patterson Sims

Associate Curator, Permanent Collection

A 50th Anniversary Exhibition

October 15 – December 7, 1980

Charles Sheeler is one of a series of exhibitions celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Each exhibition concentrates on the work of one artist represented in depth in the Permanent Collection of the Museum. The series is sponsored by Champion International Corporation. The exhibitions were organized and the accompanying publications written by Patterson Sims, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection, with Ella Foshay, Curatorial Assistant.

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Cover:

Charles Sheeler, *Interior*, 1926

Oil on canvas, 33 × 22 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.344

Introduction

Charles Sheeler (1883–1965) always governed his artistic life with intense practicality. Though he “wanted to paint more than anything else,”¹ in his late teens, Sheeler studied mechanical drawing and pursued a three-year course in applied design at the School of Industrial Art of the Pennsylvania (later Philadelphia) Museum. Then, from 1903 to 1906, fortified by the knowledge that he could support himself, he attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. William Merritt Chase, who taught there from 1896 to 1908, was his main instructor. In the summers of 1904 and 1905, Sheeler joined Chase and some of his fellow students on excursions to Europe. The cosmopolitan and voluble teacher introduced his pupils to leading popular painters in London—to Abbey, Alma-Tadema, Leighton, and Sargent—and drew special attention to the art of Hals and Rembrandt in Holland. In Spain, Chase emphasized the achievements of Goya, El Greco, and Velázquez. By such examples, as well as by his own art, Chase conveyed to his classes a brilliant, paint-laden technique, manifested in fluid portraits, still lifes, interiors, and landscapes, all saturated with an aura of ease and leisure. If Sheeler’s mature art appears to bear little imprint of his contact with Chase, it only verifies Sheeler’s assertion that “perhaps the greatest value of art teaching is that the pupil may later have something to unlearn.”²

The process of “unlearning” Chase and the impressionistic, thickly painted approach so prevalent at the turn of the century was facilitated by Sheeler’s previous study of applied design. Also directing Sheeler’s realignment to modernism were Chase classmates like Charles Demuth and Walter Pach and especially Morton L. Schamberg. Schamberg, slightly older and a former architecture student, was most open to genuine artistic innovation, and soon became Sheeler’s closest associate. Sheeler preceded Schamberg to success, and sold his first painting in 1906, from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine

Arts annual exhibition. Few of these early works survive; they consisted of painterly cityscapes and landscapes of the countryside surrounding Philadelphia, and were well within the realist canon of the day. In 1908 William Macbeth took a few works by Sheeler to show at his New York gallery. In November of that year, Sheeler had his first solo show, at James McClees’ gallery in Philadelphia, the only forum for modernism in that city.

Following his McClees Gallery exhibition, in late 1908 Sheeler was taken to Italy for a month by his parents. He discovered in the art of Giotto, Masaccio, and Piero della Francesca potent alternatives to Chase’s painterly approach. Schamberg met the Sheelers in Italy. Sheeler then traveled with Schamberg to Paris, the center of avant-garde art. The work of Cézanne, Braque, Derain, Matisse and Picasso provided revelations that confirmed their conversion to modernism: “Our interest in representing the casual appearances of nature ceased.”³

Beginning in 1910, with the help of Dr. Henry C. Mercer, Sheeler and Schamberg rented a small, isolated, late eighteenth-century farmhouse in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, about twenty-five miles north of Philadelphia. They shared with the older Dr. Mercer—an archaeologist, collector, and ceramic tile manufacturer—an enthusiasm for local, vernacular architecture and decorative arts. Their general appreciation of simple, well-made objects was soon reflected in their art. In this sense, American folk and decorative art provided models comparable to the artistic refinement and simplification generated by Cubism.

In 1912, Sheeler and Schamberg realized they needed a regular means of support, and went into business as professional photographers. Sheeler’s first clients were architects, whose finished buildings he photographed. Later that year, Arthur B. Davies invited both artists to participate in the Armory Show. Sheeler was deeply impressed by this encom-

passing survey of advanced European and American artistic tendencies, and after 1913 began visiting New York City more regularly. Around 1914 he met the photographer Alfred Stieglitz at his "291" gallery and became acquainted with Stieglitz's co-worker, the artist and connoisseur-promoter Marius de Zayas.

Though by this time Sheeler had begun to seriously pursue photography as a creative medium—notably in photographs of his Doylestown house—he nevertheless continued to paint. His paintings were included in such pivotal New York avant-garde exhibitions as the select 1916 "Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters" and the much larger "Society of Independent Artists First Annual Exhibition" in 1917. His paintings were commercially exhibited in group shows at the Montross and Bourgeois galleries, and his photographs were shown in de Zayas' Arensberg-supported Modern Gallery. His paintings and drawings began to be acquired by important collectors like Walter and Louise Arensberg (whose lively gatherings of the avant-garde he enthusiastically, if only occasionally, attended), A. E. Gallatin, Ferdinand Howald, John Quinn, and Duncan Phillips.

With each new friendship and exhibition in New York, Sheeler's interest shifted a little more from his native city to Manhattan. After Schamberg's tragic death in the Spanish influenza epidemic in 1918, Sheeler moved to New York. In 1920 he had his second solo exhibition, of photographs and paintings, at de Zayas' gallery, where he worked as an assistant. As he had earlier photographed his house at Doylestown and the surrounding countryside, he now turned to austere renditions of the city. With Paul Strand, in 1920–21 he made a six-minute film, mostly from stills of New York, interspersed with selections from Walt Whitman's poetry. It was first called *New York the Magnificent*, later *Mannahatta*—from Whitman—and eventually simplified to *Manhatta*. Edward Weston recorded after their meeting in 1922 that Sheeler made "the finest architectural photographs I have seen."⁴

What Sheeler's eye captured in photography his hand transferred to paintings and drawings. Their calm, sharp forms, often cropped shapes, and striking upward and downward perspectives mimic the camera's view. Cubism had opened up to Sheeler the possibility of planar division of form, intellectual severity, and denial of narrative and figuration. The simplicity and directness of American folk art and functional architecture offered an accessible and under-utilized subject matter. His photographs of these subjects provided cool and depersonalized representations which, rooted in American life, were to underlie all his subsequent artistic activity. The sensibility which evolved in Sheeler's work in the late teens and early twenties has come to be called Precisionism. Sheeler, along with Georgia O'Keeffe, was the main proponent among a large group of artists who stressed geometry in their immaculate renditions of still-life, industrial, and urban themes. Precisionism, in Martin Friedman's frequently cited definition, "reflects an idealized state of absolute order. Time and space are not particularized. . . . The pictures are brought to an icily defined and flawless finish, with virtually no evidence of the brush strokes or the trials and hesitations of arriving at the finished stage."⁵ A center for this American application of Cubism's and Purism's linear clarity was Charles Daniel's gallery in New York, where Peter Blume, Charles Demuth, Preston Dickinson, Elsie Driggs and Niles Spencer exhibited. Sheeler's 1922 solo show there marked him as the most advanced and accomplished painter of the Precisionist group.

In 1923, at the age of forty, Sheeler married Katharine Shaffer. The year was also marked by several significant breaks with the past. The Arensbergs had earlier decamped for California. Sheeler finally gave up his Doylestown country house. De Zayas' gallery, where he had exhibited and been employed, closed. That summer, Sheeler met the poet William Carlos Williams, whose friendship and insights were to mean so much to him. After 1923, his main income for the rest of the decade derived from freelance advertising photo assignments

and from his association with the Condé Nast publications *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, for which he had been recommended by Edward Steichen, Condé Nast's chief photographer.

In 1927 the Sheelers moved to South Salem, New York, a few hours north of the city. Sheeler was to live in this countrified area, in three different residences, for the rest of his life. He had already been enthusiastic about the austere architecture and decorative arts of the Shakers, and his interest intensified when he moved to South Salem. Sheeler eventually assembled one of the most distinguished private collections of Shaker furniture.

Sheeler's appreciation of American decorative arts was balanced by his attraction to the forms of industry. This fascination was first manifested artistically in late 1927 and early 1928, when he photographed the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge Plant in Michigan. Sheeler's images of the River Rouge Plant coolly celebrate the powerful structures of American industry. These photographs were the basis for a photo-mural design, and several works in other media.

The American realist style of Sheeler's photographs (among them, images of the River Rouge Plant)—as well as those of Berenice Abbott, Paul Outerbridge, Steichen, and Weston—received international attention in the 1929 "Film und Foto" exposition in Stuttgart, Germany. Their clear and definitive representations were critically championed against the abstract experimentation of the German "New Vision" and Bauhaus photography. The opening of this exhibition occasioned Sheeler's final journey abroad. He stopped at various German museums, where he was particularly drawn to the finely detailed paintings of Holbein, Memling and Van Eyck; they established a standard for the meticulousness of Sheeler's subsequent paintings. During this trip he also visited France and took a series of photographs of the Gothic cathedral at Chartres. Though very pleased with his photographs of Chartres, Sheeler uncharacteristically seems to have made only one drawing based upon this photo series. He believed thereafter that his work must always be American-based.

He had declined an official invitation to visit the Soviet Union and to photograph there in the spirit of the River Rouge work. From this time on, he resolved to find his subject matter within the United States.

Sheeler's affiliation with Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery in 1931 was his first sustained gallery representation. It provided sufficient economic security so that, by the following year, he stopped doing advertising photography. Unlike the experience of most American artists, the 1930s were among Sheeler's most productive and successful years. His paintings and drawings portrayed interiors and still lifes, farm buildings and industrial structures. Partly at the instigation of Mrs. Halpert, he also produced several industrial designs, mostly for table implements and textiles. Subsidized by Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, he spent part of the winter and spring of 1936 working in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia; paintings and photos resulted. His growing success and recognition were signaled by the publication in 1938 of Constance Rourke's *Charles Sheeler: Artist in the American Tradition*, which drew heavily upon autobiographical notes he had previously prepared at the publisher's request. Sheeler's first retrospective took place at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1939—one of the earliest such shows given an American painter at that museum. The decade concluded with a commission from *Fortune* magazine to execute six paintings on the theme of "Power." Published in the magazine, these paintings were exhibited as a group at the Downtown Gallery.

In 1942 Sheeler, a widower since 1933, married Musya Sokolova. They moved to Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, his final residence. Fearful of a lack of sales during the war years, Sheeler approached Francis Henry Taylor, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for a job. Through 1945 he made documentary photographs of sculpture in the museum's collection, the results of which were contained in three museum publications, two on Egyptian sculpture and one on Assyrian reliefs. It was Sheeler's first opportunity to use

color photography, and it has been suggested that the experience contributed to the brightened palette of subsequent paintings.

Two artist-in-residence appointments—at the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1946 and at the nearby Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire, in 1948—were pivotal events of the later 1940s. Several paintings derived from his exposure to the now-forlorn, noble textile mills and canaled industrial sites in this New England area. Many of these paintings were marked by the increased geometric complexity and layering of forms—approximating the use of double and triple exposures in photography—that define the final period of his art.

In 1952 Sheeler received two corporate painting commissions, for which he made photographic studies of the sites. No doubt his art appealed to corporations in part because his stylizations inventively transform agrarian and industrial sources without abandoning representation. In his later paintings he manipulated buildings as if they were still-life ingredients; his early enthrallment with Cubism was reactivated in analytic arrangements of facades. Only in the depiction of nature—plant life, rocks, and trees—does the strong sense of form falter.

In 1959 Sheeler suffered a severe stroke that left him unable to paint or draw; a second stroke ended his life on May 7, 1965.

Sheeler's association with Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Juliana Force and the Whitney Studio Club began in the early 1920s, when Mrs. Force acquired several of his works for Mrs. Whitney, and offered him a place to live. Sheeler was an early, though not charter, member of the Whitney Studio Club. From 1923 until 1927, when they moved to South Salem, Sheeler and his wife lived in rooms on the third and fourth floors above the Club's galleries at 10 West Eighth Street. He had been offered the space by Juliana Force, director of the Studio Club, whom Sheeler may have met through Marius de Zayas. After the closing of his gallery, de Zayas had been asked to organize six special exhibitions for the Whitney

Studio Club. In January 1924, under the auspices of the Whitney Studio, five works by Sheeler, selected by de Zayas, were exhibited in Paris at the Durand-Ruel Galleries. Later that year Sheeler was one of five Studio Club artists recruited to organize exhibitions at the Club. Though he also selected works by de Zayas and Braque for this show, his pairing of art by Duchamp and Picasso was intended to be particularly provocative. Simultaneously, a selection of his own paintings and photographs was seen at the Whitney Studio. Sheeler was frequently included in Studio Club members' exhibitions, and two of his paintings, *Interior* and *Geranium*, were in the opening exhibition of the Whitney Museum of American Art, in November 1931. These two works, along with *Bucks County Barn*, *Industrial Series, No. 1* and four other, now-traded works, were among Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's original gifts to the Museum. They were all purchased directly from the artist. In October 1932 Edith Halpert, Sheeler's dealer, offered the Museum the artist's most recent important painting, *River Rouge Plant*, and it was bought a few days later. The drawing *Interior*, *Bucks County Barn* was added the next year, following its inclusion in the Museum's "First Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors and Prints."

Though Sheeler continued throughout his career to be regularly chosen for the Museum's Annual and Biennial Exhibitions and group shows, fifteen years passed before another work by him entered the Permanent Collection. In 1948 *Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting*, first exhibited at a 1925 Studio Club show, was purchased from Juliana Force. In 1954, in order to obtain *Architectural Cadences*, the Museum traded to the Downtown Gallery a painting and three drawings by Sheeler, as well as four works by other artists. Sheeler's serigraph of the composition joined the painting in 1974. The artist donated *Chrysanthemums*, his earliest work in the collection, in 1955. Though photography was not a medium extensively collected by the Museum, in recognition of its central role in Sheeler's art, the silver prints *Bucks County Barn* and *Untitled (Two*



Charles Sheeler, 1942 © Arnold Newman

Pitchers and a Vase) were accepted in 1971 as the gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Temple. *Aerial Gyration*s, a gouache study on glass, from the personal collection of Edith Halpert, Sheeler's longtime dealer, was donated in 1975 by the trustees of the Halpert Foundation. Another major late painting, *On a Connecticut Theme*, was bequeathed to the Museum in 1977 by Lawrence H. Bloedel. Along with their Promised 50th Anniversary Gift of William Zorach's *The Young Boy*, the sculptor's son and daughter-in-law donated Sheeler's photographs of this sculpture and its pendant, *Figure of a Child*, in 1979. Four vintage photo-

graphs of the living room of Walter and Louise Arensberg's New York apartment were recently given to the Museum by James Maroney.

This "Concentration" of the works by Charles Sheeler in the Permanent Collection of the Whitney Museum is the second solo show of his art held at the Museum. It follows the presentation here in 1969 of a full-scale retrospective organized by the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C. This small survey offers an opportunity to assess the breadth of Charles Sheeler's achievement, within the confines of one of the largest public holdings of his art.

Charles Sheeler (1883–1965)

1883

Born July 16 in Philadelphia, the child of Charles R. and Mary Cunningham Sheeler; father works for a shipping company.

1900–3

Attends the School of Industrial Art, Philadelphia.

1903–6

Studies with William Merritt Chase at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. With Chase and other members of his class, goes to England and Holland in the summer of 1904, and to Spain in the summer of 1905.

1906

Shares first studio, with Morton L. Schamberg, a fellow Chase student; after 1909 they remain in the same building in separate studios. Spends summer in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

1906–8

Represented in the National Academy of Design and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual exhibitions. Participates in group exhibitions at the Macbeth Gallery, New York, and has first one-man show, McClees Gallery, Philadelphia.

1908–9

Travels to Italy with parents. Goes to Paris with Schamberg and has first encounter with modernism.

1910–18

Shares small house in rural Doylestown, Pennsylvania, with Schamberg; retains house until 1923.

c. 1912

With Schamberg, cooperates in freelance photography business and starts to use photographs as models for paintings and drawings.

1913

Six paintings included in the “International Exhibition of Modern Art,” the so-called Armory Show; none sell.

1914–17

Begins regular visits to New York. Meets Alfred Stieglitz, Marius de Zayas, and Walter and Louise Arensberg. Works shown at the Montross Gallery and the Bourgeois Gallery, New York. Included in the 1916 “Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters,” Anderson Galleries, New York.

1917

Shows in the “Society of Independent Artists First Annual Exhibition.” First exhibition of photographs, in a group show at de Zayas’ Modern Gallery, New York, and a one-man exhibition of photographs, Modern Gallery.

1918

De Zayas issues a portfolio of Sheeler’s photographs of de Zayas’ collection of African sculpture. Receives first and fourth prizes in the John Wanamaker Company’s “Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of Photographs.” Death of Schamberg.

1919

Leaves Philadelphia and moves to New York City.

1920–21

Collaborates with Paul Strand on a film, *New York the Magnificent*, later called *Manhatta*. Assists de Zayas (through 1923) at the gallery that now bears de Zayas’ name; has solo exhibition there of photographs and paintings.

1922

One-man show, Daniel Gallery, New York.

1923

Marries Katharine Shaffer. Begins extensive activity as freelance photographer and commences association with Condé Nast Publications. In *The Arts*, Forbes Watson writes the first evaluation of his art, in connection with an exhibition at the Denver Art Association, Colorado.

1924

One-man show of paintings and photographs, Whitney Studio, New York.

1926

Two-man show with Louis Lozowick, J. B. Neumann's Print Room, New York; solo show of photographs at the Art Center, New York.

1927–28

Leaves New York City in 1927 and moves to South Salem, New York. Spends six weeks photographing the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge Plant, Michigan.

1929

Makes his final trip to Europe; visits and photographs Chartres Cathedral, and attends opening in Stuttgart of "Film und Foto" exposition, in which his work is included.

1931

Included in opening group show, "American Photography," Julien Levy Gallery, New York. Joins Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery, where he has first of nine solo shows (others in 1940, 1946, 1949, 1951, 1956, 1958, 1965, and 1966).

1932

Ceases doing advertising photography. Moves to Ridgefield, Connecticut.

1933

Death of his first wife.

1935–36

Resides for several months in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, which serves as the impetus for a series of paintings and photographs.

1938

Publication of Constance Rourke's *Charles Sheeler: Artist in the American Tradition*, based in part upon his autobiographical notes.

1939

Retrospective, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, with a catalogue containing remarks by the artist and his close friend, the poet William Carlos Williams.

1939–40

Receives commission from *Fortune* magazine; travels to Alabama, Colorado, and elsewhere, and executes six paintings on the theme of "Power."

1942

Marries Musya Sokolova; they move to Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, his final residence.

1942–45

Photographs work, primarily ancient sculpture, in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

1946

Artist-in-residence, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts; solo exhibition held there.

1948

Artist-in-residence, The Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire; solo exhibition held there.

1950

Returns to photography and makes a series of nature studies and city scenes.

1952

One-man exhibition, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Receives painting commissions from Pabst Brewing Company, Milwaukee; Meta-Mold Corporation, Cedarburg, Wisconsin; and visits U.S. Steel, Pittsburgh.

1954

Retrospective, Art Galleries, University of California at Los Angeles. Attends opening, and vacations on West Coast.

1956

Summer visit to West Coast.

1959

Suffers a stroke which leaves him unable to paint or take photographs.

1961

Retrospective exhibition, Allentown Art Museum, Pennsylvania.

1963

Retrospective exhibition, University of Iowa, Iowa City.

1965

Dies May 7 in Dobbs Ferry, New York, of a stroke.



Chrysanthemums, 1912
Oil on canvas, 24×20 inches
Gift of the artist 55.24

Chrysanthemums

Though Sheeler admired The Eight's contribution to American art, the youthful artist regarded them as being "before my time."⁶ Sheeler's time began in 1913 with the "International Exhibition of Modern Art," the so-called Armory Show. His earliest mature works date from this period, among them the Museum's *Chrysanthemums*, which was included in the historic 1913 show.

The art Sheeler produced before 1910 is essentially unknown. In his various retrospective exhibitions, his career begins around this date. By 1910, he had put his study with William Merritt Chase at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts behind him. Abroad for two summers with Chase, he had experienced fashionable English art and absorbed classical Dutch and Spanish painting; on his third European trip, in 1908–9, he was deeply moved by the masters of the Italian Renaissance and, in Paris, by the revolutionary innovations of Cézanne, Fauvism and Cubism. By 1912, the thoughtful, cautious Sheeler was ready to assay his various sources.

He was at this point given a fitting opportunity, for in the summer of 1912 the painter Arthur B. Davies, in his capacity as president of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, wrote to request Sheeler's participation in the forthcoming "International Exhibition of Modern Art." Sheeler and his partner, Morton L. Schamberg, who was also contacted by Davies, were busy with their newly opened photography business and reconciled to a limited audience for their painting. Davies had apparently learned about

them through photographs of their work. They and the semi-expatriate Arthur B. Carles were the only Philadelphians invited to submit work to the Armory Show. Inexplicably, Sheeler also sent five paintings for review to the show's Domestic Committee, which had been set up to select from the submissions of uninvited American artists.

Six paintings—two landscapes and four still lifes—represented Sheeler in this encompassing survey. None sold. His stated aim in this group of paintings was "to get away from the factual approach to nature."⁷ *Chrysanthemums*, like all the paintings he submitted to the Armory Show, was rendered realistically, yet stressed the abstract possibilities of its subject. Its terms were limited to the simplest equation of color harmonies and mass against mass. Sheeler has placed his autumnally hued blossoms, fresh from the florist and still wrapped in paper, in a white vase. This unarranged arrangement asserts itself against a loosely painted background of mostly blue, green and violet organic shapes. A familiarity with Fauvism and the art of Cézanne, whose watercolors were shown at Stieglitz's "291" gallery in New York in March 1911, is abundantly apparent. The edge of the table upon which the vase rests is drawn in oil, not cut with a saw. Except for its linear demarkation, the table's coloration and treatment are indistinguishable from the space behind it. With its glowing palette and dissolution of figure and ground, *Chrysanthemums* makes an impressive if somewhat tentative debut for the modernist phase of Sheeler's art.

Documentary Photographs of Art

In 1912 Sheeler began to support himself as a professional photographer, documenting the projects of Philadelphia architects. Within two years he started to use the medium—in studies of his Doylestown house and environs—for its artistic possibilities and as models for paintings and drawings. In the following decade, his freelance photographic activities broadened to encompass record photographs of art for artists, collectors and galleries; the Whitney Museum owns six of these. Beyond their value as documents, they chart his wide associations within the artistic community of the late teens and early twenties. From his work for Walter and Louise Arensberg to photos made for William Zorach, Sheeler brought an artistic refinement to all of his commercial photographic endeavors.

Of the five different views Sheeler took of the main room of the Arensbergs' New York apartment around 1918, the Whitney Museum owns four. They thus provide a comprehensive record of this celebrated center of American artistic and intellectual life. The Arensbergs were rich, highly cultivated and enjoyed entertaining. With Louise's fondness for and knowledge of music, Walter's talent as a Dada poet, and their mutual passion for the art of their time, they maintained between 1915 and 1920 a salon where Demuth, Duchamp, Isadora Duncan, Max Eastman, Gleizes, Alfred Kreymborg, Picabia, Man Ray, Joseph Stella, Varèse and numerous others provocatively commingled. The Arensbergs' attitude toward decor—their iconoclastic, eclectic mixture of Pre-Columbian and African



William Zorach's "The Young Boy," 1921
Palladium print, 9¼×6 inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Tessim Zorach 79.84



William Zorach's "Figure of a Child," 1921
Palladium print, 9¼×6 inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Tessim Zorach 79.85

sculpture, simple country furniture and striking contemporary art in a white interior—by now has achieved the status of cliché. Sheeler, within the bounds of his assignment, has not sacrificed composition to the needs of data. Moving the art about (for example, Covert's *Hydro Cell*, with its enlarged sliced apple), the objects and even the rugs, he has fashioned still lifes which anticipate the complexity of his later work in this genre.

Sheeler's initial contact with the Arensbergs had probably occurred around 1914. The same year he probably met Alfred Stieglitz and his associate Marius de Zayas for the first time. These important encounters may well have taken place at the first exhibition of African art in America, held at Stieglitz's "291" gallery in December 1914. Drawing from his personal collection, de Zayas organized and selected this show and wrote a book on African art, as well as an article in Stieglitz's gallery-related publication *Camera Work*. De Zayas' exhibition was unquestionably visited by the sculptor William Zorach, who described it as having "an extraordinary magic and spiritual quality . . . it transcends the flesh; and it had almost unbelievable power, versatility and imagination."⁸ In 1916, de Zayas arranged a second African show, in his Modern Gallery. The following year, Sheeler produced a portfolio of twenty photos of de Zayas' collection, which de Zayas published in a small edition in 1918. Zorach could not afford to buy African sculpture, but he did scrape together the fifty dollars to buy Sheeler's portfolio.

Among the initial artistic manifestations of Zorach's identification with African sculpture were his 1921 mahogany carvings of his son and daughter, Tessim and Dahlov. Their poses were directly based on frontal standing figures similar to those of African pieces in Sheeler's portfolio. Sheeler's photographs of this pair, apparently taken at the sculptor's request, thus depict art inspired, in part, by his own earlier photographs.



Southeast Corner, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918
Palladium print, 7⁵/₈ × 9³/₄ inches
Gift of James Maroney



Section of East Wall, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918
Palladium print, 7⁵/₈ × 9³/₄ inches
Gift of James Maroney



Northwest Corner, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918
Palladium print, 7⁵/₈ × 9³/₄ inches
Gift of James Maroney



Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting, c. 1922
 Crayon on paper, 19×24 1/2 inches
 Purchase 48.4



Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting, 1922
 Oil on canvas, 20×24 inches
 Philadelphia Museum of Art; Bequest of
 Margaretta S. Hinchman
 Photograph by A. J. Wyatt



Charles Demuth
Sailboats (The Love Letter), 1919
 Tempera on cardboard, 15 1/2×19 3/8 inches
 The Santa Barbara Museum of Art; Gift of
 Wright Ludington

Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting

A relatively late arrival to the American avant-garde, Sheeler's art swiftly passed through an abstract phase. By the early 1920s he had left modernism behind. Busy with photography projects and, later, with de Zayas' commercial activities, Sheeler apparently either produced very few paintings and drawings prior to 1920 or intentionally obliterated the evidence of this less-resolved period of his art. Sheeler's stated desire to get away from a factual approach to nature, seen in *Chrysanthemums* and related still-life and landscape paintings and drawings of the early teens, was infrequently realized. Only certain atypical, yet often reproduced paintings, culminating in the coolly non-representational *Flower Forms* of 1917, inconclusively explore non-objectivity and Fauvist color.

During this period, Sheeler sought an alternative to abstraction and to the emulation of Cubism and Fauvism, and he found it in photography. From then on, photographs preceded every new subject in his paintings and drawings. For this subject matter he turned to the spartan, uncluttered interior of his rural Bucks County weekend retreat, and the austere facades of the area's barns. Only in 1920, in his *Church Street El*, the quintessential Precisionist cityscape, do urban similitudes appear in Sheeler's work. Through the aperture of his viewfinder camera, Sheeler studied his compositions at length and upside down—imbuing reality with a precise structural abstraction.

Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting can almost be said to be a postscript to his modernist phase. It and two much later versions of the theme are isolated instances of his interest in Futurist pictorial ideas. Never a sportsman, Sheeler did not, according to Constance Rourke, go near the water in composing this controlled plane of billowing

motion. All his information came from books and picture files. The nautical theme had previously been adapted to modernist ends by Stuart Davis, Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, John Marin, William Zorach, and most similarly by Sheeler's Pennsylvania Academy classmate Charles Demuth. Sheeler's scene is the essence of the full-blown yachting experience, if one does not insist upon the accurate placement of rigging. Stills of the boats' movements are compressed within a single frame. It is a bleached dream of scrupulously constrained and gradated curves and masses.

The crayon drawing of *Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting* was preliminary to an oil, and indicates that color followed form in Sheeler's art. This drawing is one of the very few surviving from the numerous studies he made for his major paintings. Sheeler was a perfectionist who only infrequently advertised the gradual stages of his progress. In the painting *Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting*, the portholes have been sealed and the markedly pigmented color is highly dramatized. A lithograph, *Yachts*, with a very closely related image, was printed in 1924. Sheeler called the series "studies in polyphonic form."⁹ Polyphony, the unification of several distinct melodies, had spilled over into poetic usage. It was in the parlance of such Imagists as Amy Lowell, a Boston affiliate of the Arensberg circle.

One of Sheeler's most complex compositions, *Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting* was the embryo of two later paintings, *Wind, Sea and Sail*, 1948, and *Wings*, 1949. These are among the first of Sheeler's many uses of repeated images in the final phase of his career. With the reintroduction of rhythmic sail patterns, Sheeler sprang again into abstraction from the point at which he had left it behind.



Bucks County Barn, 1923
 Crayon and tempera on paper,
 19 1/4 x 25 1/2 inches
 Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.468



Bucks County Barn, 1915
 Silver print, 9 7/8 x 7 7/8 inches
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Temple
 71.162

Bucks County Barn

"It might be suggested," John Szarkowski has observed, "that if photography supported Sheeler during part of his late life, it supported his painting throughout his career."¹⁰ Sheeler's photographic images of the late teens were the aesthetic capital he lived on for the rest of his life. It was for Sheeler's photographs that Henry McBride reserved his highest praise in his laudatory review of Sheeler's 1920 show at de Zayas' gallery. Commenting upon Sheeler's "relentless eye" and "personal feeling toward textures and values," McBride judged Sheeler's photographs "among the most interesting productions of their kind."¹¹

His 1915 *Bucks County Barn* is one of the best known of this early series of images. Its sunlit winter scene shows Sheeler at his most documentary. This photograph has more in common with a snapshot than with the rigorous simplicity and calculation of his later work in the medium. Details such as a ramshackle fence, four casually flung-open doors, a cluster of metallic containers and, further to the right, within the dark interior, the faint outline of a carriage wheel are contained in its unfiltered view. In the crayon drawing *Bucks County Barn*, the minutiae are gone. Sheeler's view had settled upon essences. The barn expands timelessly across the paper as a solid, weighty mass hovering in space. As Rourke has described it: "These elements are indivisible. They cannot be separated or reduced."¹² The most conventional and sentimental of American topics has been rendered impenetrable and iconic. The drawing's contrapuntal massing of

light and shadow, stone and wood, squares and triangles, has the solidity of sculpture. It sums up Sheeler's feelings about rural Pennsylvania architecture after a decade of living in the region. Janus-like, the unbending meticulousness of its execution looks backward to American folk painting and forward to photographic precision.

As a subject, such barns satisfied both Sheeler's personal and artistic requirements. Within his immediate visual environment he had found structures that evoked the same profound admiration he had felt for the work of Piero della Francesca during his visit to Arezzo in 1908. Sheeler likened the beauty and tautness of Piero's compositions to the functional unity of a well-designed house, characterizing them as pictures based upon "blueprints."¹³ In the fieldstone and wood construction of Pennsylvania barns he saw a similar intelligence, honesty and reserve. Form followed function, and the materials were treated with integrity. Hard physical work, careful craft, and devotion to duty were embodied in these agrarian structures.

In his 1920 review, Henry McBride realized that "Mr. Sheeler's barns are genuine Bucks County barns in spite of something in the work that the instructed will call 'cubism'. . . . Sheeler makes compositions that are as compact as Picasso's out of various parts without destroying, as has been hinted, the barn resemblance."¹⁴ In his 1923 drawing of a Bucks County barn, Sheeler grafted Synthetic Cubist pictorial construction to the core of American life.

Still Lives

During the 1920s and early 1930s, Sheeler was busy trying to support himself and had less time for painting and drawing. For a while, he acted as an art dealer, selling, for instance, a painting and a sculpture from the Arensberg collection to John Quinn.¹⁵ He took documentary photos of art for collectors like Albert Barnes and Mrs. Eugene Meyer, artists as disparate as Brancusi and Arthur B. Davies, and for the galleries of Joseph Brummer, Knoedler, Parish-Watson and others. After 1923 he was engaged in a thriving freelance advertising-photography business. Later in the decade, he did languid and perfunctory

fashion and portrait work for Condé Nast's *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue* magazines. Sheeler recalled that the Museum's 1923 *Bucks County Barn* "was painted between ten and two at night";¹⁶ art had to be fit into his spare time. The end was being shortchanged by the means.

In the brief periods Sheeler could devote to painting, he turned to the still-life genre. Here objects could be arranged under consistent lighting conditions and left undisturbed. For the components of his still lifes, Sheeler chose objects from his collection of American decorative arts, a collection that became



Geranium, c. 1926

Oil on canvas, 32 × 26 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney

31.343

increasingly distinguished from the time of his marriage in 1923. As Sheeler confirmed, his "interest in Early American architecture and crafts has, I believe, been as influential in directing the course of my work as anything in the field of painting."¹⁷

Though nature is present in the flowers and fruit of the Museum's *Geranium* and *Interior*, it is the objects made by human hands that dominate—as a comparison with Sheeler's 1912 *Chrysanthemums* reveals. In photographic studies of the period, Sheeler eliminated nature altogether. In *Untitled (Two Pitchers and a Vase)*, the three vessels stand alone as protagonists, the one to the right emptied of the flowers that had filled it in *Chrysanthemums*. Over the next decade or so,

Sheeler's pottery, rugs, country and Shaker furniture moved about his paintings and drawings like pieces on a chessboard. Their manipulation provided Sheeler with a more accessible means to study color, tilting perspective, and the problems of realism than did the observation of figures and landscape.

Geranium is a remarkably vacant picture. The cropping of the turned, slat-back, finial-topped eighteenth-century Pennsylvania country chair accentuates its austerity and the French curve of its arm. The octagonal candlestand adds crude embellishment to blunt functionalism. One peers down at these two furnishings with a precipitousness that suggests the geranium might slide off its support. The chair is virtually identical to one



Section of South Wall, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918
Palladium print, $7\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Gift of James Maroney

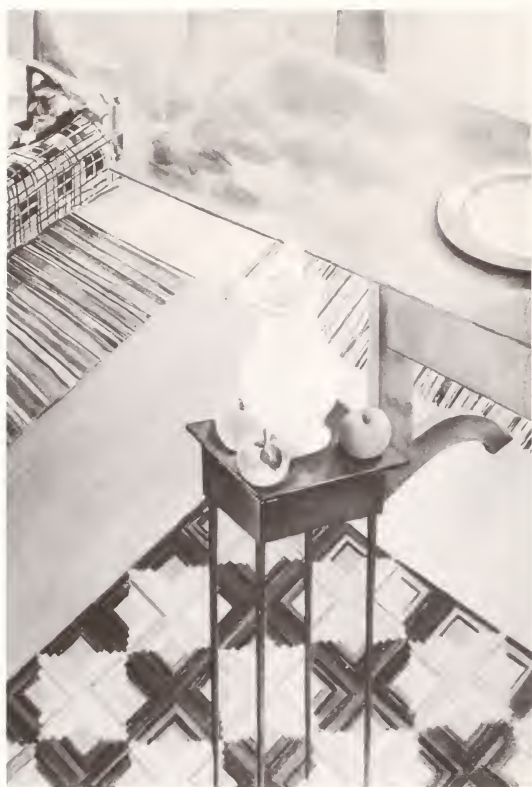


Untitled (Two Pitchers and a Vase), 1922
Silver print, 8×10 inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Temple 71.163

depicted in the Museum's photograph by Sheeler of the Arensbergs' New York apartment. The chair might well have been given to Sheeler by them at the time of their departure for California in 1920, and certainly illustrates an affinity of taste between collector and artist.

In *Interior*—as in other of Sheeler's later, more complex still lifes—quirks of pictorial structure such as the ones found in *Geranium* are multiplied. The quartet of attenuated legs of the small Shaker table seems to be floating in

space. The forward, bow-shaped "shoe foot" of the three-board Shaker trestle dining table has simply been chopped off. The small bed in the background, covered with a printed or woven blue and white coverlet, seems impossibly small. While its exaggerated distance may be explained as a compositional decision, it also suggests a photographic source for the painting. Though strict "realism" was fundamental to Sheeler's aesthetic at this moment, he was in fact involved here with rather

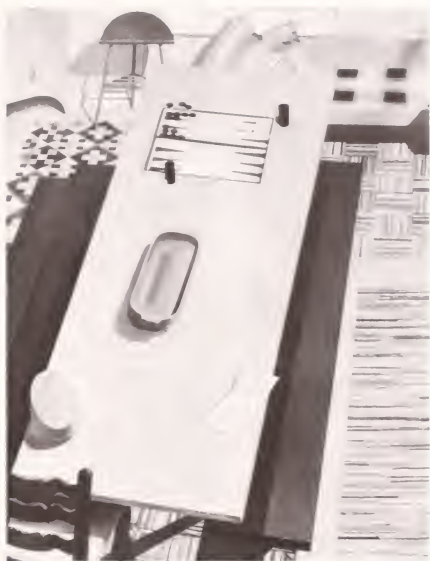


Interior, 1926

Oil on canvas, 33 × 22 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.344
(on cover in color)

elaborate liberties. The hooked and braided rugs give the painting a fantastic complexity—especially the one by the bed, whereby four patterns abut. Sheeler contradicts the Precisionists' usually invisible brushstrokes by his very painterly finish on the top of the trestle table: it is icing on a cake of contrivance. Indeed, Sheeler seems to contradict his own declared standards. He extolled the Shakers because “they understood and convincingly demonstrated that rightness of proportion in a house or a table, with regard for efficiency in use, made embellishment superfluous. Ornament is often applied to form to conceal uncertainty and this applies to painting as well.”¹⁸ Yet *Interior*'s painterly finish and complexity do not indicate Sheeler's uncertainty, but rather his gradual move away from the greater freedom of modernism to a more rigid system of representation.



Americanana, 1931
Oil on canvas, 48×36 inches
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Lowenthal



American Interior, 1934
Oil on canvas, 32½×30 inches
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut; Gift of Mrs. Paul Moore



Home, Sweet Home, 1931
Oil on canvas, 36×29 inches
The Detroit Institute of Arts; Gift of Robert H. Tannahill



River Rouge Plant, 1932
Oil on canvas, 20×24 inches
Purchase 32.43

River Rouge Plant

"The contemplation of things as they are without substitution or imposture is in itself a nobler thing than a whole harvest of invention"—Francis Bacon.

Sheeler was, of course, not the first American artist to utilize industry as a subject. The painters Charles Demuth, Preston Dickinson, Elsie Driggs, Louis Lozowick and Joseph Stella, and the photographers Lewis Hine, Paul Strand and Edward Weston had preceded him.¹⁹ Sheeler's importance in this area resides in the definitive and extended grasp he had of this topic. His first work with industrial subject matter occurred at the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge Plant in Michigan in late 1927 and early 1928. His River Rouge

photographs and subsequent renditions in other media represent an apotheosis of the powerful forms of machine-age productivity.

Sheeler had been commissioned to photograph at the River Rouge Plant by Vaughan Flannery, art director of N. W. Ayer, a Philadelphia advertising agency for which Sheeler had worked on several accounts, including one for the Ford Motor Company. It was Flannery's proposal that the Ford Motor Company underwrite a photographic documentation of the River Rouge Plant in conjunction with a massive advertising campaign to introduce the Model A Ford. This car replaced the Model T, whose production had ceased several months before. With the



Industrial Series, No. 1, 1928

Lithograph, 8 1/8 x 11 1/8 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.807

Model A's introduction, the company's manufacturing operation had shifted from Highland Park to the River Rouge Plant, where Henry Ford had realized his dream of completely assembling an automobile on one site.

Sheeler came to believe in industry as the fullest embodiment of the ethos of his time, and it became a primary subject for the rest of his career. The River Rouge Plant's enormous scale—it covered 2000 acres and employed 75,000 workers—and awesome machinery fascinated him. Sheeler produced a group of thirty-two carefully composed photographs for the Ford Motor Company—which thereafter used them, often uncredited, in company publications. Sheeler also printed a set for himself. Individual images were additionally printed and published in art journals, though the series has, to date, never been published in its entirety. It was quickly felt, as expressed in a 1931 article, that Sheeler's River Rouge photographs captured the "very soul of steel, in a series of the truest portraits of our times."²⁰

As Sheeler took the photographs, he sensed that "maybe some pictures could be pulled out [of them]."²¹ Eventually, he produced five paintings, three conté pencil drawings, two watercolors, a pencil and gouache study and a print based upon the plant. Curiously, few precisely related photographic sources for these compositions can be found among Sheeler's known surviving River Rouge photographs.

Of the two River Rouge works in the Museum's collection, the earliest is the 1928 lithograph *Industrial Series, No. 1*. Because the composition was reversed in the printing, the large white-topped smokestack of the cement plant section of the complex therefore appears incorrectly at the right, and the architectural elements of the slag screen house at the center are also reversed. The number in the title of the print suggests that it may have

been intended to be the first of a series of lithographs or, alternatively, to signify that it was Sheeler's first non-photographic image of industry produced for public view. Fewer than a dozen copies of the lithograph are recorded as existing today.

In 1932, Sheeler produced his third painting of the complex; it followed *American Landscape* and *Classic Landscape*. *River Rouge Plant* is the most compact of these first three and the only one whose title identifies it with its specific source. It focuses upon the buildings at the end of the boat slip. In these unusually roofed structures, coal was prepared for use as a fuel in the nearby cement plant. At the extreme right side of the painting, the distinctive, water-gauged bows of two ships (most likely the *Henry Ford II* and the *Benson Ford*), which brought the coal to the buildings, are seen.

River Rouge Plant, like other paintings in the series, is subdued in color. Since Sheeler did not return to Detroit until 1935, he would have had to remember the color, having only his black-and-white photos for reference. At least one critic lamented that *River Rouge Plant* and certain other Sheeler works resembled "tinted photographs."²² But for the artist, heightened verisimilitude was the objective; the unemotional and neutralizing technique he adopted became the "means to an end . . . to present the subject in itself without the distraction of the means of achieving it."²³ The "subject in itself" for Sheeler was the power and sanctity of American industry. Between the time of Sheeler's River Rouge photographs and his paintings based upon the plant, brutal hostilities continued between workers and management at the complex, and America underwent a devastating economic reversal. But Sheeler persisted in his affirmation of the power of this shrine to American productivity, without worrying over the fate of its suppliants.



American Landscape, 1931
Oil on canvas, 24×31 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Gift
of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller



Classic Landscape, 1931
Oil on canvas, 25×32¼ inches
Estate of Mrs. Edsel B. Ford



Interior, Bucks County Barn, 1932
Conté crayon on paper, $15 \times 18\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Purchase 33.78

Interior, Bucks County Barn

Sheeler's closest associates among artists were photographers—Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, Edward Weston, Edward Steichen and Ansel Adams. Sheeler ended his 1923 article on Alfred Stieglitz by asking “how long before photography shall be accorded an importance not less worthy than painting and music for the transmission of ideas?”²⁴ As time passed, however, Sheeler's insistence upon the significance of this medium diminished. After 1930, though he continued to use the camera throughout his life as a means of seeing and a source of imagery (as other artists might use sketches), photographs were incorporated less frequently in exhibitions of his work. Sheeler's last solo show of photographs occurred in 1926. Of the four major retrospectives of his art held during his lifetime, his 1939 retrospective included seventy-four photographs, his 1954 one contained twenty-nine, and his 1961 and 1963 shows none. Following his affiliation with Edith Halpert in 1931, few, if any, photographs by Sheeler were shown at her Downtown Gallery. Following Sheeler's death, Mrs. Halpert arranged to have all his photographic prints and negatives sold to one collector, with the stipulation that they be kept out of circulation. It should be noted that photographs were not then collected as avidly as now, and in most instances they were so modestly priced as to be of small benefit to the artist or the dealer. Yet essentially, Mrs. Halpert believed that a familiarity with Sheeler's photographs lessened an appreciation of his drawings and paintings, which she was more interested in selling.

In intimately scaled studies on paper of

Bucks County barns, Sheeler had early on discovered that he could utilize conté crayon to simulate photography's black-and-white exactitude, fastidiousness, tonal range, and condensed scale. The Museum's *Interior, Bucks County Barn* is one of a small group of conté crayon drawings from the early 1930s which carried his mastery and control of conté crayon to its highest level. Like *Interior, Bucks County Barn*, most of these images are based upon his early Doylestown photographs. Sheeler returned to Bucks County subjects not because he was at a loss for fresher ideas, but because these views remained with him so intensely. As he had delayed several years before making paintings of the River Rouge Plant, Sheeler increasingly felt the need to be assured that the images of his art had sustaining power.

In *Interior, Bucks County Barn*, Sheeler sought not an archetype, but a scene resonant with specificity. The Museum's drawing is one of the most complexly detailed of his works on paper. The shadowy quietude of these antiquated carriages in storage conveys the aura of a bygone age. Considered along with his River Rouge images, they underscore Sheeler's appreciation of the history and breadth of American ingenuity and workmanship. The half-light of all of these graphic translations of Bucks County interior photographs makes their clarity, concentration and tortuousness of execution particularly haunting. Scanning the profuse interplay of forms in *Interior, Bucks County Barn*, Sheeler's belief in the deity of detailed craftsmanship is manifest.

Later Works

While Sheeler's stylistic approaches ranged from modernist emulations to photographic precision to planar reductions, his themes remained consistent. His enduring subjects were agrarian and industrial structures. The later phase of his work (usually recorded as beginning around 1946, with his one-month residence at the Phillips Academy) may be contrasted with the literalism that governed his paintings and drawings of the 1930s and early 1940s. Sheeler had reached into his past to select the sources of his third and final style. Buildings were dissected and their sections reconstituted or repeated, with color balance and the contrast of simple and complex masses dictating their eventual configuration. The

planar divisions and reductions of these later works took their direction from Cubism and photographic multiple exposure. The faceting and flattened abstraction of Cubist painting, which Sheeler had briefly explored thirty years before, was now more fully developed. It was complemented by his concurrent exploration of photographic multiple exposure. His only prior use of this photographic technique occurred in a 1932 photo-mural study which combined three of the most powerful of his River Rouge photographs.

The designs of Sheeler's later paintings are not only related to the technique of double exposure, but improvised on specific photographic points of departure. Such a connection



Left:
Aerial Gyration, 1953
Gouache on glass, 9³/₄ × 7 inches
Given in memory of Edith
Gregor Halpert by the
Halpert Foundation 75.9

Blast Furnaces, Pittsburgh,
1952
Photograph



is apparent in a comparison of the 1952 *Blast Furnaces, Pittsburgh* with the Museum's gouache study *Aerial Gyrations* of the following year. Sheeler's trip to Pittsburgh in 1952 to visit and photograph the circular and vaulting forms and delicate catwalks of the blast furnaces at U.S. Steel generated at least two other paintings and related studies, *Ore into Iron* and *Continuity*. The figure seen at the right of the source photograph is nowhere evidenced in the paintings: it is the grand arabesque of industrial forms, not the worker, that is Sheeler's subject.

As in *Aerial Gyrations*, Sheeler's later art evolved from photographs to paintings through the intermediary stages of gouache on glass or tempera on Plexiglas. Both glass and Plexiglas provided ease of alteration; false starts and errors could be eradicated with a sponge. Around 1953 William Lane, a collector and a close friend of Sheeler's, gave him sheets of Plexiglas, a material he produced. This material had the benefit of being relatively unbreakable, and Sheeler was thereafter convinced to retain more of these Plexiglas studies.

Architectural Cadences and *On a Connecticut Theme*—the latter a title Mrs. Halpert had urged the artist to use in place of *Bucolic Landscape*, his original title, which she felt was overly folksy—are typical examples of Sheeler's industrial and agrarian planar reductions. Dimension is not volumetric in these paintings; an image and its ghost or variation alternately complete form and echo its underlying structure. The configuration of *Architectural Cadences* was surveyed again in a serigraph print, which alters both the buildings' outlines against the organic foil of drifting, ephemeral clouds and the coloration.²⁵ Intensely geometric, and planned in an era commanded by the biomorphic and intuitive, the paintings Sheeler completed before his debilitating stroke of 1959 carry his art to an obvious conclusion. Untraceable to single sources, *Architectural Cadences* and *On a Connecticut Theme* are structural archetypes which merge his belief in the American vernacular with a liberating force of abstraction.



Architectural Cadences, 1954
Oil on canvas, 25×35 inches
Purchase 54.35



On a Connecticut Theme, 1958
Oil on canvas, 19½×29½ inches
Lawrence H. Bloedel Bequest 77.1.48



Architectural Cadences, 1954
Serigraph, 6¼×8¾ inches
Purchase 74.23

Notes

1. Quoted in Constance Rourke, *Charles Sheeler: Artist in the American Tradition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), p. 3.
2. Quoted in *Charles Sheeler: Paintings, Drawings, Photographs*, exhibition catalogue, introduction by William Carlos Williams (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1939), p. 10.
3. Quoted in Rourke, *Charles Sheeler*, p. 25.
4. Edward Weston, *The Daybooks of Edward Weston*, ed. Nancy Newhall (New York: Horizon Press, 1961–66), vol. 1, p. 6.
5. Martin Friedman, *The Precisionist View in American Art*, exhibition catalogue (Minneapolis, Minn.: Walker Art Center, 1960), pp. 12–13.
6. Charles Sheeler, interview by Bartlett Cowdrey, December 9, 1958, transcript in Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
7. Charles Sheeler, response to questionnaire, January 20, 1956, Artists' Files, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
8. William Zorach, *Art is My Life* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1967), p. 66.
9. Quoted in Rourke, *Charles Sheeler*, p. 92.
10. John Szarkowski, *Looking at Photographs: 100 Pictures from the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1973), p. 106.
11. Henry McBride, *The Flow of Art: Essays and Criticisms of Henry McBride*, ed. Daniel Catton Rich (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1975), p. 156.
12. Rourke, *Charles Sheeler*, p. 97.
13. Quoted in *Charles Sheeler: A Retrospective Exhibition* (Los Angeles: Art Galleries, University of California, 1954), p. 17.
14. McBride, *The Flow of Art*, p. 155.
15. Francis Naumann, "Walter Conrad Arensberg: Poet, Patron and Participant in the New York Avant-Garde, 1915–20," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, 76 (March 1980), p. 28.
16. See *Charles Sheeler: A Retrospective Exhibition*, p. 27.
17. Charles Sheeler, "Autobiography" (unpublished manuscript, 1938), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
18. Quoted in Rourke, *Charles Sheeler*, p. 97.
19. Elsie Driggs visited the Ford Motor Company River Rouge Plant in January 1927 and depicted the plant's crisscross conveyors in a drawing (in the collection of the Whitney Museum) and a now-destroyed painting. This information is drawn in large part from Mary Jane Jacob's *The Rouge: The Image of Industry in the Art of Charles Sheeler and Diego Rivera*, exhibition catalogue (Detroit: The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1978).
20. Samuel M. Kootz, "Ford Plant Photos of Charles Sheeler," *Creative Art*, 8 (April 1931), p. 266.
21. Quoted in Jacob, *The Rouge*, p. 15.
22. Edward Alden Jewell, "Sheeler in Retrospect: The Museum of Modern Art Presents All Phases of the Artist's Achievements," *New York Times*, October 8, 1939. William Carlos Williams reported that Sheeler used a camera obscura in painting. See *Charles Sheeler: A Retrospective Exhibition*, p. 7.
23. Charles Sheeler, interview by Martin Friedman, June 18, 1959, transcript in Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
24. Charles Sheeler, "Recent Photographs by Alfred Stieglitz," *The Arts*, 3 (May 1923).
25. According to Frederick S. Wight, this print was issued, at the suggestion of Edith Halpert, to be given to those individuals who helped underwrite the cost of the color reproductions for the catalogue of Sheeler's 1954 retrospective at the University of California. A study more closely related to the print than to the painting of *Architectural Cadences* is owned by Wight.

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Works in the Permanent Collection

Chrysanthemums, 1912

Oil on canvas, 24×20 inches

Gift of the artist 55.24

Bucks County Barn, 1915

Silver print, 9⁷/₈×7⁷/₈ inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Temple 71.162

Northwest Corner, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918

Palladium print, 7⁵/₈×9³/₄ inches

Gift of James Maroney

Section of East Wall, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918

Palladium print, 7⁵/₈×9³/₄ inches

Gift of James Maroney

Section of South Wall, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918

Palladium print, 7⁵/₈×9³/₄ inches

Gift of James Maroney

Southeast Corner, Living Room of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Apartment, New York, c. 1918

Palladium print, 7⁵/₈×9³/₄ inches

Gift of James Maroney

William Zorach's "Figure of a Child," 1921

Palladium print, 9¹/₄×6 inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Tessim Zorach 79.85

William Zorach's "The Young Boy," 1921

Palladium print, 9¹/₄×6 inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Tessim Zorach 79.84

Untitled (Two Pitchers and a Vase), 1922

Silver print, 8×10 inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Temple 71.163

Pertaining to Yachts and Yachting, c. 1922

Crayon on paper, 19×24¹/₂ inches

Purchase 48.4

Bucks County Barn, 1923

Crayon and tempera on paper, 19¹/₄×25¹/₂ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.468

Geranium, c. 1926

Oil on canvas, 32×26 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.343

Interior, 1926

Oil on canvas, 33×22 inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.344

Industrial Series, No. 1, 1928

Lithograph, 8¹/₈×11¹/₈ inches

Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney 31.807

Interior, Bucks County Barn, 1932

Conté crayon on paper, 15×18³/₄ inches

Purchase 33.78

River Rouge Plant, 1932

Oil on canvas, 20×24 inches

Purchase 32.43

Aerial Gyration, 1953

Gouache on glass, 9³/₄×7 inches

Given in memory of Edith Gregor Halpert by the Halpert Foundation 75.9

Architectural Cadences, 1954

Oil on canvas, 25×35 inches

Purchase 54.35

Architectural Cadences, 1954

Serigraph, 6¹/₄×8³/₄ inches

Purchase 74.23

On a Connecticut Theme, 1958

Oil on canvas, 19¹/₂×29¹/₂ inches

Lawrence H. Bloedel Bequest 77.1.48

CONCENTRATIONS

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